

Prison returned \$3M

Union officials at Federal Correctional Complex claim operations hurdles being ignored

By Shea Johnson
Staff Writer

VICTORVILLE — In the past two fiscal years, the Bureau of Prisons returned to the BOP's Western Regional Office more than \$3 million, or roughly 4.7 percent, of operational funding allotted for the Federal Correctional Complex in this city.

Meanwhile, union officials at

the prison complex have raised concerns over outdated and needed equipment that they say — coupled with staff shortages — are threatening inside security and community safety.

Years-old ballistic vests, lacking medical apparatus, vehicles with bald tires and antiquated cameras and monitors are some of the core issues to which union leaders point. But despite repeated appeals to executives, they say they've been consistently told: The cash isn't there.

"We have minimal checkpoints at the prison, because we can't afford metal detectors,"

said John Kostelnik, president for the local prison workers union, describing another cause for concern. "We should have a metal detector at every single unit at the federal correctional institutions and we don't. Why? Because they said we don't have the money."

"Apparently, we did."

In fiscal year 2016, \$2.3 million was sent back. Last fiscal year, which ended June 30, another \$719,000 was returned.

The details were revealed by Mary M. Mitchell, the regional director for the Western Region, in a letter to Rep. Paul Cook on

Oct. 18. It was in response to Cook's Congressional inquiry a month earlier seeking a slew of financial information about the complex after employees had brought unease over staffing levels to his Apple Valley district office.

Mitchell said the returned allocation was due to a number of factors including adjustments based on a decrease in inmate population; unused funding to outside medical and dedicated cost centers, such as uniform allowance and Advanced Occupational

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AFTER
QUAKE,
DISASTER
FROM THE
SKY

A helicopter on a quake-related mission flips in Mexico, killing 13 on the ground

High Desert still growing



Chelsea Augusta plays with her son Aiden at their home in Victorville on Thursday. After growing up in the Los Angeles area and living in Anaheim, Augusta, 32, said she decided to leave her Magic Kingdom neighborhood for life in Victorville. [JAMES QUIGG, DAILY PRESS]

Although some are leaving the region, population is up 15,000 in the last 6 years

By Rene Ray De La Cruz
Staff Writer

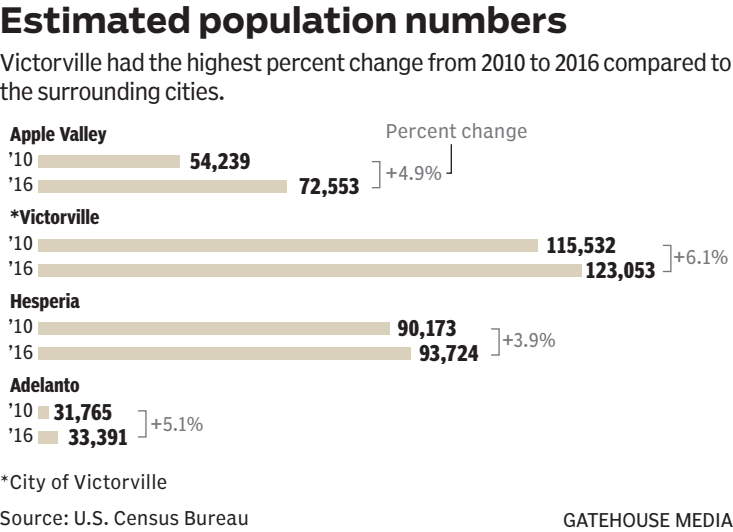
VICTORVILLE — Affordable housing, great weather, family and the proximity to Southern California attractions — these are the primary reasons why people have relocated to the High Desert from other parts of the country.

Dozens of new residents told the Daily Press they left the East Coast, Midwest and other parts of Southern California for life in one of the most “beautiful” and “affordable” parts of the state.

“Overall, more people are coming into the High Desert and California than leaving,” said Karen Sanchez, with Hamilton Landon Real Estate. “People are moving here from all over the country, especially from down the hill. We’re seeing people that are retiring here or buying their first home.”

The High Desert has actually grown by over 15,000 residents in the last six years, with the city of Victorville experiencing an almost 85 percent increase since 2001, according to the California Department of Finance.

California welcomed about



514,000 move-ins from other states in 2016 and the year prior — the third-largest increase in the nation, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Sanchez said “affordability” is the key factor for those moving into the area, with many new home buyers paying a \$1,500 a month mortgage in the High Desert instead of facing rising rental costs in Orange and Los Angeles counties.

Sanchez said the popularity of the High Desert is evident in the population growth of the four core municipalities, which have all increased by an average of 5 percent over the last seven years.

After experiencing decades of summer humidity, frigid

winters and dealing with mosquitos “the size of birds,” Michigan native Janice Schneider decided it was time to move West.

“After my recent divorce in 2014, I figured it was time to start over,” said Schneider, 47, who works for an automotive center in Riverside. “I have friends who live in Oak Hills and they found me a small house near Eleventh Avenue in Hesperia.”

After looking at “shocking home prices” in Orange and Los Angeles counties, Schneider said she’s thankful for her “little house” and her monthly mortgage payment “under \$1,500.”

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Herbert Raymond McMaster, U.S. national security adviser, speaks at the Security Conference Saturday in Munich, Germany. [SVEN HOPPE/DPA VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Adviser: Meddling ‘incontrovertible’

National security adviser says there is undeniable evidence of a Russian plot to disrupt 2016 election

By Desmond Butler and David Rising
The Associated Press

MUNICH — President Donald Trump’s national security adviser said Saturday there was “incontrovertible” evidence of a Russian plot to disrupt the 2016 U.S. election, a blunt statement that shows how significantly the new criminal charges leveled by an American investigator have upended the political debate over his inquiry.

The statement by H.R. McMaster at the Munich Security Conference stood in stark contrast to Trump’s oft repeated claim that Russian interference in his election victory was a hoax.

“As you can see with the FBI indictment, the evidence is now really incontrovertible and available in the public domain,” McMaster told a Russian delegate to the conference.

The detailed document presented the most compelling public evidence to date that the Russian operation was elaborate, expensive and real. Citing emails and conversations by the perpetrators of the plot, it also demonstrated that the ongoing probe may have access to explosive intelligence material gathered on the Russian operations.

McMaster also noted that special counsel Robert Mueller’s team had shown that the U.S. was becoming

“more and more adept at tracing the origins of this espionage and subversion.”

Just minutes before, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had dismissed the indictment as “just blabber.”

“I have no response,” Lavrov said when asked for comment on the allegations. “You can publish anything, and we see those indictments multiplying, the statements multiplying.”

But Lavrov did not say what he specifically disputed in the indictment.

McMaster and Lavrov addressed the annual conference of world leaders, defense officials and diplomats, giving more general back-to-back opening remarks. But both were immediately hit with questions about the U.S. indictment and the broader issue of cyberattacks.

In Russia, news of the indictment was met with more scorn.

“There are no official claims, there is no proof for this. That’s why they are just children’s statements,” Andrei Kutsikh, the presidential envoy for international information security, told Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

McMaster also scoffed at the suggestion that the U.S. would work with Russia on cyber security issues.

“I’m surprised there are any Russian cyber experts available based on how active most of them have been undermining our democracies in the West,” he said to laughter. “So I would just

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A RAY OF LIGHT FOR HINKLEY

Daniel Hawkins says his Desert Lighthouse brings Hinkley residents a measure of pride